

## CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter discusses activities necessary when the case goal for youth is not reunification, adoption and legal guardianship

- 21.1 Mandates and Rationale
- 21.2 Definition and Purpose
- 21.3 Chafee Foster Care Independence Program
  - 21.3.1 Program Goals
  - 21.3.2 Eligibility
  - 21.3.3 Referral Process
  - 21.3.4 Youth Assessment
  - 21.3.5 Life Skills Curriculum
  - 21.3.6 Educational Assistance
  - 21.3.7 Education and Training Vouchers
- 21.4 The Section Reserved for Services for Youth younger than age 16.
- 21.5 Aftercare Program
  - 21.5.1 Referral and Assessment
  - 21.5.2 Maximum Expenditures Guidelines
  - 21.5.3 Procedural Guidelines for Service Delivery
    - 21.5.3.a Emergency/Crisis Intervention
    - 21.5.3.b Housing/Room & Board
    - 21.5.3.c Support Services
    - 21.5.3.d Education and Training Vouchers
    - 21.5.3.e Job Training/Employment Assistance
    - 21.5.3.f System Changes/Case Record Documentation
    - 21.5.3.g Case Closing
    - 21.5.3.h Timeframes and Exceptions
- 21.6 Independent Living Arrangement
  - 21.6.1 Criteria for Independent Living Arrangement
  - 21.6.2 Independent Living Arrangement Housing Options
  - 21.6.3 Independent Living Arrangement Support Services/Systems
  - 21.6.4 Termination of Independent Living Arrangement
- 21.7 Transitional Living Program (TLP)
  - 21.7.1 Transitional Living Advocate
    - 21.7.1.a TLP Advocate Training
    - 21.7.1.b TLP Advocate Approval
    - 21.7.1.c Advocate Maintenance Payment
    - 21.7.1.d Characteristics of the Youth
  - 21.7.2 TLP Group Home
  - 21.7.3 TLP Single/Scattered Site Apartments
- 21.8 Exit Plan Interview
- 21.9 Resource Development
- 21.10 Outcomes

## **21.1 Mandates and Rational**

Section 477 of Public Law 99-272 requires each youth in out-of-home care, ages 16-21 to have an Independent Living Plan based on a Life Skills Inventory.

The Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (the Act), signed into law December 14, 1999, established the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program, hereinafter referred to as Chafee. This Act directs states to include a broad range of stakeholders in the planning, coordination, and delivery of independent living services.

National statistics indicate about 20,000 youth emancipate from the foster care system each year when they reach age eighteen. These young people leave without emotional or financial support that families provide. Many of these youth are not adequately prepared for life on their own. Turning eighteen may mean the beginning of a long and solitary journey toward adulthood if they have no one to turn to for help or support.

To strengthen the system of support that contributes to the safety of these young people we must: 1) increase early and consistent access to independent living preparation skills, especially opportunities for realistic practice of life skills; 2) ensure the active involvement of young people in the individual planning and decision making process that will lead to successful emancipation; 3) ensure no youth is released from foster care to homelessness; and 4) provide access to transitional housing and longer term affordable housing options.

Young people who have left foster care say the immediate struggle for day-to-day survival after leaving care makes planning for a good future very difficult. To safeguard the well being of youth making this transition, a continuum of support and preparation must begin when the youth enters out-of-home care. The Act enables the division to provide time-limited services and financial assistance to help these young adults as they develop the skills and education needed to move successfully into self-sufficiency and independence.

Chafee services should not be used as a substitute for sound permanency planning. In this context, independent living services do not constitute a permanency goal, but form a set of services provided to older youth to assist them in their efforts in reaching self-sufficiency. Independent Living is not an alternative to adoption for youth. Enrollment in Chafee shall occur concurrently with continued efforts to locate and achieve placement in adoptive families. The youth's case goal should be driven by his/her individualized case plan.

For youth who plan to enter into a post-secondary or other educational program, remaining in the state's care and custody to continue to have access to necessary services may be in their best interest. It may appear that Chafee conflicts with the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) of 1997. However, ASFA focuses on safety, permanency and well-being for all children, while Chafee focuses on services. The

Division can comply with ASFA and Chafee by ensuring foster care youth in Legal Status 1 have access to independent living services regardless of their current placement or permanency.

## **21.2 Definition and Purpose**

Adolescence is a time of adjustment culminating, hopefully, with a successful transition to adulthood and independence. This is a very difficult time of transition for the youth, which can only be made easier with proactive, supportive case planning, involving the youth. There is no definite age for this maturational process to occur. The only certainty is that the process will take place.

For youth in out-of-home care, who can neither return home nor be adopted, independence becomes a factual circumstance. The earlier the youth's needs are addressed, the greater the youth's chances for successful transition. The case manager's role is to ensure that the youth is involved in all phases of planning for their future and to facilitate the youth taking advantage of opportunities provided for them.

## **21.3 Chafee Foster Care Independence Program**

Chafee encompasses the Division's existing Independent Living Program (ILP), supplements services for youth younger than age 16, and expands services to the Aftercare Program for former foster youth ages 18 – 21 who have exited care at age 18 or after, but have not reached age 21.

### **21.3.1 Program Goals**

- To identify youth who are likely to remain in foster care until age 18 and to help these youth make the transition to self-sufficiency by providing services. These services may include, but are not limited to: assistance in obtaining a high school diploma, career exploration, vocational training, job placement and retention, training in daily living skills, training in budgeting and financial management skills, substance abuse prevention, and preventive health activities (including smoking avoidance, nutrition education, and pregnancy prevention).
- To assist youth who are likely to remain in foster care until 18 years of age prepare for and enter post-secondary training and educational institutions;
- To provide personal and emotional support to youth aging out of foster care, through mentors and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults;
- To provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education, and other appropriate support and services to former foster youth, who left care on or after their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and have not yet reached 21 years of age;

- To assist youth to compliment their own efforts to achieve self-sufficiency and to assure that program participants recognize and accept their personal responsibility in preparation for the successful transition from adolescence to adulthood; and
- To assure youth, ages 13-21, are involved in their planning to reach self-sufficiency and understand their personal responsibility in attaining their goals.

### **21.3.2 Eligibility**

- Youth, ages 13-21, currently in the legal custody of the Division and in out-of-home placement;
- Youth, who exited legal custody of the Division on or after their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday but have not yet reached age 21.

NOTE: As space permits in the basic skills classes, Chafee may serve DYS or DMH youth, legally adopted youth, or youth no longer in Children's Division (CD) custody under age 18. Funds may not be expended for attendance, homework or other incentives. Payments for adopted, DYS or DMH youth must be prearranged and approved by the respective agency or adoptive parent. This population of youth is also ineligible for college/vocational training funding or other supportive services.

### **21.3.3 Referral Process**

Youth identified by the case manager and Family Support Team (FST) as an age appropriate youth Chafee services should be referred to an ILP Specialist assigned to the area in which the youth resides. The case manager will complete the referral process by giving the ILP specialist the following:

- Children's Services Case Plan Evaluation (CS-1);
- Life Skills Inventory (CS-3);
- Social Summary;
- Psychological evaluation, if available;

### **21.3.4 Youth Assessment**

The youth's independent living needs will be identified when the CS-3, Life Skills Inventory, is completed. A minimal or intermediate level of competence in any category on the CS-3 identifies areas needing improvement on the CS-1 Attachment, IL Case Plan. The youth may desire to improve his/her independent living skills even though they exhibit adequate or exceptional levels of competence. These should also be noted on the CS-1, Attachment.

Once the CS-1 Attachment and CS-3 has been completed and the youth has been referred for Chafee services , the ILP Specialist will administer the Daniel Memorial's Independent Living Assessment for Life Skills or the Ansell/Casey Life Skills Assessment to evaluate the youth's independent living skills.

When talking with the youth about the assessment process the case manager or ILP Specialist should assure the youth that this process is not a test, there are no wrong answers and they cannot fail the assessment. Assist the youth in understanding this assessment is used to help them and other treatment team members to identify the youth's strengths, needs and direction for future planning.

#### **21.3.5 Life Skills Curriculum**

Basic life skills training shall include but is not limited to:

- Self esteem
- Personal responsibility
- Financial responsibility
- Housing issues
- Employment issues
- Daily personal care
- Sexual responsibility
- Relationship building; and
- Realistic goal setting

Group size depends on availability of youth in any given area. In order to provide quality services, it is recommended the groups be maintained at a minimum of six (6) with a recommended maximum of fifteen (15). If there are less than six youth eligible for the program in any one area, ILP Specialists and contracted trainers will coordinate with other areas to maximize services. Every youth who meets the eligibility requirements will be given the opportunity to complete the life skills training and receive support services.

#### **21.3.6 Educational Assistance**

Youth in out-of-home care are often one or more grade levels behind due to the disruptions in their lives. Education should be approached in a comprehensive and

integrated manner in the early years. Begin early with on-going encouragement and support for higher education and make the educational plan part of the permanency plan.

More specifically:

14-15 year old – Begin development and implement individualized education plan with youth and make certain they are enrolled in the Pre-ILP Program.

16-18 year old – Identify and assist in the development and implementation of an educational plan. Provide encouragement and support for those who have an existing plan. Enroll the youth in the ILP Life Skills training.

18-21 year old – Identify educational needs and provide assistance, support or assist in the development of an educational plan.

All youth should have a minimum of a GED as an overall goal.

### **21.3.7 Education and Training Voucher**

The Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendments of 2001 added a 6<sup>th</sup> purpose, Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) to the Chafee program. ETV allows states to provide funds for youth to attend post-secondary education or training programs. Early and on-going support for education is extremely important in preparing youth for self-sufficiency. Setting, monitoring and incorporating educational goals as part of their permanency plan will assist youth in understanding the importance of having a vision of educational success. At a minimum our foster youth should have a GED as their educational goal, but it is our desire that youth shall have the opportunity to receive post-secondary education and training. The ETV Program gives the Children's Division the opportunity to provide educational and training funds to assist eligible youth interested in pursuing a higher education to reach their goals.

Those Eligible for ETVs include:

- Youth currently eligible for Chafee services;
- Youth who were adopted from foster care after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday;

Additionally:

- Youth participating in a higher education program on their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday shall remain eligible until age 23, provided they are making satisfactory progress;
- Youth must have a high school diploma or equivalent;

- Youth must demonstrate academic success or motivation in school (generally a “C” average or its equivalency or as otherwise agreed upon with the plan) or in training program;
- Youth must be accepted to an accredited or pre-accredited public or non-profit college/university and vocational school or certified training program;
- Appropriate scholarships, grants and other financial assistance must be explored and utilized, and;
- There must be reasonable assurance the youth will graduate from the educational or training program.

Youth may receive up to \$5,000 per year or the total “cost of attendance”. The cost of attendance includes:

- Tuition and fees.
- Room and Board for former foster youth who left care at age 18 or after but have not reached age 21. Room and Board assistance may also be eligible for youth 21-23 if they are enrolled full-time in a post-secondary educational or training program.
- Rental or purchase of required equipment, materials or supplies (including a computer).
- Allowance for books, supplies, transportation, etc.
- Special study projects.

Eligible youth may apply for post secondary education/training assistance by completing the attached Chafee Education and Training Voucher application, CS-ILP-6. Once the youth has completed the application and provided the necessary documentation, the application shall be forwarded to the ILP Specialist assigned to the county for processing. ETV assistance will be reviewed and made on a semester basis.

This application is also available on the DSS Intranet at <http://dssweb/cs/index.htm> and the DSS Internet at <http://www.dss.mo.gov/> under Children’s Services program or directly to the Chafee web site at <http://www.dss.mo.gov/cd/chafee/index.htm>. The application can be printed off these sites and completed by hand or the youth may complete the application on-line and print it off.

**21.4 This Section is currently reserved for services for youth younger than age 16.**

## 21.5 Aftercare Program

The intent of the Foster Care Independence Act was to increase funding to the states for the expansion of the independent living program. This expansion will allow the Division to serve eligible youth between the ages of 18 to 21 who left foster care at age 18 or after, but have not reached age twenty-one.

Case managers and ILP Specialists shall notify youth currently in care or are in the process of transitioning out of care about assistance available under Chafee. Former foster care youth may also be identified through their former case manager and ILP Specialists.

There may be several avenues former foster care youth take to return to the Division for services. Youth may directly contact their former case manager or ILP Specialists. Youth may come to the Division for assistance through Family Support Division (FSD) or referrals from other agencies (e.g., homeless shelters, Workforce Development, and etc.)

ILP Specialists are located in the counties listed below throughout the seven administrative areas. They serve designated counties within their area.

Area 1:	Buchanan, Lafayette
Area 2:	Boone, Jefferson, Shelby
Area 3:	Cape Girardeau, St. Francois
Area 4:	Greene, Jasper, Phelps
Area 5:	Jackson
Area 6:	St. Louis City
Area 7:	St. Louis County

Aftercare services are meant to be flexible, short term and are intended to be used as a **safety net** in order to meet the needs of the young adult when:

- Remaining in state care and custody after age 18 is not a realistic or practical option;
- The youth has requested to leave custody upon their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday or after and his/her case manager has assisted him/her in developing a reasonable and acceptable exit plan, or;
- The Juvenile/Family Court has automatically terminated jurisdiction upon the youth's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.



### **21.5.1 Referral and Assessment**

County offices shall establish the following protocol to ensure eligible young adults coming into the agency shall have access to services:

1. When the young adult's first contact with the agency is through FSD, the FSD worker shall follow procedures instructed through the IM00-191 memo, dated December 27, 2000, on the process of collaborating with or referring the young adult to Children's Division (CD). FSD staff will refer the young adult to the Children's Division (CD) Intake Worker during the application process.
2. In counties where there is not an assigned Intake Worker, the CD supervisor will be responsible for the assignment of the referral. In the absence of, or if there is not a CD supervisor based in the county, the assignment of the referral shall be the responsibility of the County Director or Circuit Manager.
3. The assigned CD staff shall meet with and provide the young adult with the CFCIP Support Application (CS-ILP-4) form to complete. When completed the form will provide the following information:
  - Identifying information for the young adult;
  - Current housing situation and household composition;
  - Educational level and completion;
  - Employment and salary information;
  - Current and outstanding bills;
  - Medical/mental health needs and access;
  - Available family/community resources;
  - Current/Future needs;
  - Ability/Inability to reach self-sufficiency and continued independence;
  - Present and future goals; and
  - Willingness to accept personal responsibility.

CD staff or the ILP Specialist shall complete a database search to confirm the current age of the young adult and the age at discharge to ensure program eligibility and document the findings on the form. Upon receiving information of the young adult's needs, the CD Worker shall immediately notify the ILP Specialist assigned to their county by telephone. After discussing the referral with the ILP Specialist and if it is determined the young adult's needs are not imminent, the worker will fax and mail the original CS-ILP-4 to the ILP Specialist. The ILP Specialist or Specialist's designee shall assist the young adult in designing a plan that is realistic and supports their efforts to become self-sufficient or to continue to live independently. The agreement shall be updated or renegotiated as often as needed, but at a minimum, within 90 days, to review the progress made.

When a young adult coming into the agency is in a state of crisis or in imminent need, the worker shall contact the ILP Specialist or designee and jointly assess the immediate needs of the young adult to formulate a plan to divert crisis using community resources or Chafee funds. The worker, ILP Specialist or designee shall:

1. Identify immediate and ongoing service needs.
2. Assist the young adult in developing a self-sufficiency plan.
3. Link the young adult to existing community/state agency resources to meet imminent needs.
4. Provide emergency assistance/crisis intervention funding and linkage as need.
5. Each request for assistance with emergency/crisis intervention funds exceeding \$200.00 shall require the approval of Area Office.

In the event the ILP Specialist and the Specialist's supervisor are not accessible, the worker shall consult with their supervisor or County Director/Circuit Manager to develop a plan that will meet the immediate need of the young adult. Once the crisis situation has passed, the worker will follow the procedure of referring the young adult to the designated ILP Specialist, if the Specialist was not accessible at the time of the crisis. When available, the Specialist shall immediately follow up with the worker involved with the young adult.

### **21.5.2 Maximum Expenditures Guidelines**

It is difficult to ascertain the needs and array of services former foster care youth may require. Although the Act increased federal funding, it is not possible to meet all the needs of youth and former foster youth who are eligible for Chafee. It is not the intent of the Division to deny any eligible youth access to Chafee services. However, in order to ensure funds are not overspent, it is necessary to place categorical, annual, and lifetime spending caps on available services.

1. Maximum lifetime expenditure cap, per youth for all services, excluding educational assistance is \$3,500.00.
2. Maximum lifetime expenditure cap for emergency/crisis intervention funds is \$1,000.00.
3. Maximum lifetime expenditure cap for room and board services is \$2,000.00.
4. Maximum lifetime expenditure cap for support services is \$500.00.
5. Educational/Vocational tuition and book assistance is capped at \$3,500.00 per academic year, per youth, and is to be reviewed each academic semester.

NOTE: There may be on rare occasions a need to exceed the maximum expenditures limit to meet the individualized needs of the young adult. If it becomes necessary to exceed the maximum limit, a request shall be submitted to the Area Director or Director's designee.

It will be the responsibility of the ILP Specialist or designee to track all Chafee expenditures. When a youth coming into the agency is in a state of crisis and the ILP Specialist or designee is not available to assist the youth, the county's designated worker, in consultation with their supervisor or County Director/Circuit Manager, shall assist the youth in developing a plan that will meet the immediate need of the youth. The county office shall inform the ILP Specialist or designee of any funds expended on the youth during the crisis period.

### **21.5.3 Procedural Guidelines for Service Delivery**

Chafee funds may be expended for a variety of reasons and should be used as a support for the young adult, not as an on-going supplemental funding source. Expenditures may include, but should not be limited to, emergency/crisis intervention, housing/room and board, educational assistance, job training/employment assistance, and support services.

#### **21.5.3.a Emergency/Crisis Intervention**

We recognize we may encounter emergency/crisis situations at any time throughout our lives. We look to family/friends for assistance and support. The young emancipated foster youth may not always have these resources. Emergency/Crisis intervention funds are intended to be used as a **safety net** to assist these young adults when possible and appropriate. These funds shall be considered as short term, "quick fix" opportunities to enable the young adult to continue to strive towards independence and self-sufficiency. These may include, but should not be limited to, food, emergency auto repairs, utility payments and emergency shelter. It is expected that a ninety-(90) day time

frame or less will be used to stabilize the young adult and allow them to continue to be self-sufficient.

The maximum spending limit for emergency crisis intervention funds for former foster youth (ages 18-21) is \$1,000.00 per youth for the entire eligibility period. Before the emergency/crisis intervention funds are administered, the following shall occur.

- Designated county worker shall assess the needs of the eligible young adult by assisting the young adult in completing the CS-ILP-4, CFCIP Support Application;
- ILP Specialist and/or designee shall assist the eligible young adult in developing an individualized case plan; and
- ILP Specialist and/or designee shall refer/assist the young adult to explore and utilize all available community resources before accessing Chafee funds.

**TABLE 1 – Service Guide for Youth in Crisis**

NEED	MAXIMUM	FREQUENCY	COMMENTS
<b>AUTO REPAIRS</b>	\$200.00 – Matched by youth when possible	As needed	Three estimates required. Essential for work or education.
<b>UTILITY PAYMENTS</b>	Included in the \$1,000.00 maximum	As needed	Must first apply for Energy Assistance and with Community Action Agencies.
<b>EMERGENCY SHELTER</b>	Included in the \$1,000.00 maximum	As needed	Access local shelters, friends/family members, motel, and former foster homes.
<b>FOOD</b>	Included in the \$1,000.00 maximum	As needed	Application for Food Stamp benefits, food pantries, churches, and purchase of groceries.
<b>RENT</b>	Included in the \$1,000.00 maximum	As needed	Homeless or at risk of homelessness, refer for Housing Assistance or HUD.
<b>OTHER</b>	Included in the \$1,000.00 maximum	As needed	<u>Transportation</u> – bus passes, taxi voucher, gas money. <u>Clothes</u> – clothes closets, Wal-Mart. <u>Work Related Expenses</u> – uniforms, job training related.

#### **21.5.3.b Housing/Room and Board**

One of the biggest steps youth will make in the transition from foster care to living independently is assuming the responsibility for their own housing. Housing

options are limited by factors such as cost, availability of suitable housing especially in the rural areas, and the willingness of landlords to rent to this young population. Division staff should recognize that these are young adults seeking guidelines and assistance to meet their own goals, and the Division is no longer their legal guardian. Involve young adults at every level of the assessment and delivery of services. Emphasis is placed on shared decision making. Using the individual comprehensive assessment, we must maximize the use of identified community resources to assist in meeting housing needs. The following guidelines are to be used in meeting housing needs based on the youth's comprehensive assessment:

- Refer and utilize all available community resources;
- Identify what services are already available;
- Identify where efforts should be concentrated to locate, recruit, and cultivate resources to meet the youth's needs;
- Work with current contracted providers to develop options to meet the youth's needs;
- Develop current foster homes, transitional living advocate homes as resources for former foster youth; and
- Identify available Native American host families for youth of Native American descent.

The ILP Specialist and/or designee shall work with youth to encourage a safe and appropriate environment. Housing options may include, but not limited to, the following:

- Supervised apartments;
- Shared homes;
- Live-in adult apartments;
- Host homes;
- Boarding homes
- Shelters;
- Section VIII or subsidized housing; and

- Transitional living group homes/scattered site apartments.

The Act leaves the definition of room and board to each state to define. It does limit, however, the portion of the funds that can be used to 30 percent for this purpose. Parameters for assistance available under this identified need are food, rent, security and utility deposits, start up kits, basic furniture and necessities. Maximum lifetime limit of \$2,000.00 is set to anticipate different cost factors in different areas of the state.

**TABLE 2 – Room and Board Services**

ITEM	MAXIMUM EXPENDITURE	FREQUENCY	SPENDING PARAMETERS
FOOD	1 time Start up - \$100.00 max	\$300 maximum \$50.00 per request	Food only, no alcohol or tobacco products
RENT	\$2,000.00	Lifetime	100% first month, 75% second month, 50% third month, 25% fourth month.
SECURITY DEPOSIT	\$1,000.00	Lifetime	Rent deposits only – first and last month.
UTILITY DEPOSITS	\$300.00	Lifetime	Gas, electric, water, phone
START UP KITS	\$300.00	Lifetime	Household items, i.e., dishes, towels.
BASIC NECESSITIES	\$300.00	\$100.00 Annually	Hygiene and cleaning supplies.
BASIC FURNITURE	\$1,000.00	Lifetime	Bed, bedding, chest, table/chairs, sofa, lamp.

### **21.5.3.c Support Services**

The ability of young people exiting or who have exited foster care to develop a support network, and the influence of informal role models to serve as mentors in a support network is critical. While each of the young adult's needs is important in its own right, we are increasingly learning the importance of significant adult relationships in supporting young adults during the transition to adulthood. Support services for former foster youth must focus on a larger target than the establishment of mentoring relationships. As we identify the important resources, which will be needed by these young adults to support their efforts to achieve independence, we must develop partnerships with public and private agencies that already offer the needed services. Emphasis is placed on connecting or referring youth rather than providing financial assistance. However, financial assistance may be provided on a short-term basis until other community resources are available or until the young adult becomes self-sufficient.

Support services should include, but are not limited to the following;

- Life Skills – Our ILP curriculum must clearly have a life skills component that is both specific and intentional and provides youth with tangible and

intangible skills. It must provide youth with real-world practice experiences. Refer the former foster youth to life skills classes if the youth has not previously completed the classes. The youth may need only a particular module to expand their skills and will not need to complete the entire curriculum. The youth may also take “booster/refresher” courses as needed.

- Transportation – Identified as a critical component in order for the youth to maintain employment or continue with their education. Must be safe and reliable. Bus passes and taxi vouchers may be provided to assist youth. In rural areas where public transportation is not available, it is essential to connect youth with community services.
- Health Care – It is suggested that foster and former foster youth are more likely to have health and mental health problems than the general population. Therefore, it is imperative that physical and mental health needs be met for youth to succeed in other realms. In the absence of Medicaid coverage, former foster youth will have limited access to health care. This problem is exacerbated by employment that typically does not provide medical, dental or mental health benefits. Given these obstacles, it is extremely important youth be referred to physical, mental and dental health care services in the community in which they live, i.e. local health departments, family planning programs, free health clinics, and other medical and mental health services which charge based on ability to pay. At this time, we are unable to use Chafee funding to pay for direct medical care for this population of youth.
- Mentoring – Research has indicated one of the key factors why some foster children succeed when others do not is the presence of a significant adult in the lives of youth who succeed. Committed and skilled adults are essential to guide and help young people maneuver in the world on their own. Although career role models serve a significant purpose, it must also include personal connections. The significant adult might be a biological family member, an adopted family, former foster family, teacher, counselor, peer, former case manager or any number of other people. Any of these people who have a connection to the young adult may be more than willing to serve as a mentor, if asked.
- Child Care – Appropriate and affordable childcare is a crucial need for young parents. It is difficult for the young parent to move towards self-sufficiency by obtaining an education or gainful employment when childcare is an issue and is not addressed. Programs such as HeadStart and Parents as Teachers are available. Other resources may include volunteer Resource Moms, school-based childcare and state subsidies.
- Other – Work related expenses including clothes, shoes, criminal checks, etc., application fees and credit checks may also qualify for assistance.



Expenditures are capped at a lifetime maximum of \$500.00 for any one, or, a combination of support services.

#### **21.5.3.d Education and Training Vouchers**

The Education and Training Vouchers Program is also available to former foster care youth eligible for Aftercare services. Refer to section 21.3.7 Education and Training Vouchers for current foster care youth.

#### **21.5.3.e Job Training/Employment Assistance**

All youth need opportunities to explore career options available to them. The future is bleak for youth entering the job market with low educational attainment and poor job-readiness skills. Providing young people with adults who care about them and can serve as career role models can also assist them in striving for higher-wage positions with a continuing career pathway. Our focus should be on longer-term and more intensive career training as opposed to training that is designed for immediate employment, requiring relatively little skills training. Emphasis must be placed on information and referral to the community/state agency resources.

All employability/training plans should be developed with the young adults based on their interests and strengths. The development of the training plan should be a collaborative effort among division staff (FSD&CD), One Stop Centers, the young adult and other community partners. The training plan may require job search/placement assistance, work readiness training, classroom occupational skill training, adult education literacy or a combination of these training activities. The training plan may direct the youth to work part-time, temporary, internships or on-the-job training. Each training plan should be individualized to the young adult.

Job training may be accessed through the One Stop Center and the youth's eligibility for other programs including financial aid. Other funding sources of the One Stop partners should be explored including Vocational Rehabilitation and Job Corps.

#### **21.5.3.f System Changes/Case Record Documentation**

In compliance with the Act, the Division will collect data, track characteristics of the youth receiving services through Chafee, and the quantity and quality of the services provided. Entering a Chafee Aftercare youth into ACTS is done via the ZCEE and the three screens that follow. The flow is identical to opening or re-opening a child using ZCAA or ZCCC, except requiring fewer fields. Certain fields are automatically populated when an action code of E is used with the youth's DCN. The following are required fields to properly open a Chafee Aftercare youth into ACTS:



System Changes

- Field 1: Open Reason – New Action of “E”. Reopen for Chafee youth Screen transaction will be “ZCEE”.
- Field 1-10: Automatically populated with action used in field 1.
- Field 11-15: Automatically populated. Leave as is, unless youth has moved.
- Field 16: Goal must be “06”.
- Field 20: Religious preference. Leave as is, unless there has been change.
- Field 21: Preventive Services – Should be “yes” since each youth will be assessed.
- Field 22: Automatically populated as “6”.
- Field 23: Date youth began receiving services.
- Field 24: Legal status must be “8”.
- Field 40: Drug exposure – use “Z”.
- Field 41: Automatically populated with “1”.
- Field 42: Required field – Enter placement begin date. Must be the same as field 23, when youth began receiving services.
- Field 43: Automatically populated with “17”.

- Field 45: Pre-placement visits – Youth must have visited before living there, therefore should be “yes”.
- Field 46: Vendor number required if youth is in a FHO, RHO, FGH, RFA, TLS, TLG.
- Field 47: Placement type: Enter one of the following: ILA, TLA, FHO, RHO, FGH, RFA, SCH, TLS, TLG.
- Field 47c: Required field – Enter “0” for ILA, TLA, TLG, TLS, SCH. Enter appropriate code for all other placement types.
- Field 49-53: Address required if youth is in ILA, SCH, TLA.
- Field 55: Automatically populated as “13”.
- Field 56: Required field. Only codes 1-4 should be used for maintenance and the amount.
- Field 102: Case close reason.
- Field 103, 105 Independent Living Specialist's/Designee's worker ID number.

The ACTS logic will look to see if the youth is eligible for Chafee services by checking that the youth is between the ages of 18 –21 and the youth exited custody on or after his/her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. If the youth does not meet these criteria, an error message will be received.

#### Case Record Documentation

The ILP Specialist or designee shall maintain a record for each young adult returning to the Division for assistance by setting up a new record. Other sections may be set up in the record, but the following outline for case record organization is required at a minimum:

#### **1. Treatment Services Section**

- SS-61;
- Narrative in chronological format.

## **2. Forms Section**

- CFCIP Support Application – CS-ILP-4
- Individualized agreement/pact signed by the young adult and ILP Specialist/Designee. The Family Self-Sufficiency Pact, IM-300 may be used.
- Payment history, retaining copies of CS-65 or DBF-14.
- SS-6, Authorization for Release of Information.

## **3. Correspondence Section**

- Documentation of referrals to community resources. The Referral and Transmittal, IM-311 form may be used.
- Any letters sent/received through outside mail.

## **4. Administrative Review Section**

A Peer Record Review will be conducted on a quarterly basis to coincide with the ILP Specialists' meeting. This process is to ensure documentation of essential service components exists in the record and to provide an opportunity for periodic examination of service quality. A minimum of 10% of the cases will be reviewed per year, with a minimum of two cases per quarter. Cases to be reviewed will be selected on a random basis, consisting of open and recently closed cases. Recently closed cases are defined as those closed within the last three months. DSS Research and Evaluation will identify the randomly selected cases. Prior to the meeting the ILP Specialists will be provided with the list of cases to be reviewed. Items to be examined may include but are not limited to the following:

- Updated SS-61;
- Completed CS-ILP-4 (Strengths, needs, community/family resources and clear understanding of the young adult identified);
- Timeframes of meeting with the young adult are met;
- Individualized agreement/pact signed by the young adult and ILP Specialist/Designee;
- Documentation of community referrals;
- Documentation of actual services provided;

- Entries of contact made by or for the young adult documented;
- Narrative entries signed and dated; and,
- Cased closed in a timely manner.

A checklist of the above items will be provided at the time of the review. The checklist will be completed and signed by a minimum of two members of the review team.

Members of the review team may consist of ILP Specialists, their supervisors, Area or Central Office staff. The checklist will be filed in this section when completed.

#### **21.5.3.g Case Closing**

The young adult may request services only once or return intermittently as services are needed. If the young adult comes into the agency with an immediate need (e.g. car needs repair and is necessary to get to work and/or school) and would like assistance in meeting only this need, the ILP Specialist or designee shall assist in meeting this need. The SS-61 shall be reopened and other necessary forms completed as indicated above. In an effort to prevent future urgent needs or crisis with this young adult, the ILP Specialist or designee may offer additional assistance in budgeting or make a referral to an existing community program on budgeting. Once the urgent need has been met, and the young adult does not require additional services, the case may be closed. If there are multiple requests for services throughout the young adult's eligibility, the SS-61 shall be opened and closed at each interval.

The CS-ILP-4 shall be completed or updated at each interval, if it has been six months or more since the last service.

When a young adult comes into the Division for assistance requiring longer-term services, the case shall remain open until such time that all referrals are made and/or service needs are addressed. For young adults needing tuition/book assistance only, the case shall be open at the time of the request and remain open until educational payments have been made. For young adults requiring tuition/books assistance, the record shall remain open until such time all service needs/referrals are addressed. Any activity shall be documented in the case file.

#### **21.5.3.h Timeframes and Exceptions**

For youth that remaining in state care and custody after age 18 is not an option or if the youth has developed a reasonable and acceptable aftercare plan and requested to leave custody, Chafee services should be used as a **safety net**, not a supplemental funding source, to assist them in reaching self-sufficiency and independence.

Former foster youth who left care at age 18 or after, but have not reached age 21 may choose to request assistance only once or return intermittently to seek assistance as needed. The Act is very clear, funding can not be expended for room and board for any child who has not reached 18 years of age or for young adults upon reaching their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. There are no exceptions to this law. Former foster youth who left care prior to age 18 are not eligible for Chafee services. All Chafee services must end for the young adult upon reaching his/her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, regardless of the legal status.

Categorical, annual, and/or lifetime spending caps apply throughout the eligibility period with a lifetime maximum of \$3,500.00, excluding education assistance/job training. Any exceptions may be submitted to Central Office through normal supervisory channels.

## **21.6 Independent Living Arrangement**

An Independent Living Arrangement is a state approved and subsidized placement option for youth age 17 and older who cannot return home. The case manager in conjunction with the FST determines the youth's suitability for placement in an independent living arrangement, by assessing the youth's motivation, abilities, skills and capabilities for living independently and ultimate emancipation from the service delivery system.

### **21.6.1 Criteria for Independent Living Arrangement**

Independent Living Arrangements (ILA) should be the **planned** placement for youth in out-of-home care and should never be used when a more appropriate placement resource is available for the youth. The payment of \$307.00 for monthly maintenance is made directly to the youth when they are in an ILA placement. Criteria for an ILA are as follows:

1. Youth is at least 17 years of age;
2. Youth is under court jurisdiction and in the care and custody of the Children's Division;
3. There is no likelihood of reunification with parent/legal guardian;
4. The youth does not want to be adopted;

5. A Life Skills Inventory (CS-3) has been completed;
6. The IL Plan is documented and attached to the CS-16;
7. The case manager has consulted with the ILP specialist who gave the youth a favorable recommendation;
8. Youth has successfully graduated from the ILP Life Skills program of instruction;
9. Youth is able to demonstrate competency in life skills;
10. Youth is able to manage his/her own finances and live independently;
11. Youth has demonstrated responsible conduct for at least 12 months:
  - a. No criminal law violations;
  - b. If applicable, school performance is equal to youth's capabilities; and
  - c. Responsible money management.
12. Youth is attending an educational or vocational school regularly to the satisfaction of school officials and is gainfully employed; and
13. Youth has assisted or developed their plan for independent living.

For the Chafee Aftercare youth, this placement type may be the most appropriate option.

#### **21.6.2 Independent Living Arrangement Housing Options**

There are a variety of housing options available to youth who have demonstrated the skills/competencies to live in an independent living arrangement. Whatever option is selected by the youth, it must be stable and safe. Housing options include the following:

1. Single dwelling (house, apartment, mobile home);
2. Shared housing;
3. Boarding home;
4. Dormitory (college program); or
5. Subsidized housing (HUD-Section 8).

### **21.6.3 Independent Living Arrangement Support Services/Systems**

The majority of youth in ILA placements have limited or no family support systems to rely on in the event they experience a crisis, i.e., financial, health, emotional, etc. Therefore, it is critical that the case manager assist the youth in identifying and accessing resources to enhance the prospects for success in the ILA. Specifically, the case manager, ILP Specialist and youth should identify, to the extent possible and appropriate, the following support systems:

1. Medical/dental services;
2. Educational/vocational training programs/options;
3. Employment opportunities;
4. Emergency contacts within the agency;
5. Family supports;
6. Religious supports;
7. Community sponsor/mentor; and
8. Others as needed.

### **21.6.4 Termination of Independent Living Arrangement**

An Independent Living Arrangement subsidized and supported by the Division is temporary and should be terminated under the following circumstances:

1. Youth has demonstrated success in living independently and the family support team agree that the youth will likely continue to live successfully as an adult in the community and should be released from court jurisdiction;
2. Youth is unsuccessful in living independently and requires placement in a more structured and supervised setting, i.e., transitional living program, out-of-home care or residential treatment;
3. Youth is in runaway status in excess of seven (7) consecutive days and likelihood of his/her returning to care is remote;
4. Youth engages in criminal activity which results in action by the legal system;  
or

5. Youth is released from court jurisdiction, Division custody, or reaches his/her 21st birthday.

## **21.7 Transitional Living Program**

The Transitional Living Program (TLP) is intended for a youth, age 16 or 17 and over, whose permanency goal is not reunification, adoption or legal guardianship. The goal of transitional living is to provide an opportunity for older out-of-home care youth to practice the life skills training received in the life skills classes in order to live successfully, as an adult, in the community.

Adolescence is a time of testing, not only one's abilities but others' abilities as well. It is a time of trial and error. Our out-of-home care youth need to be allowed to make mistakes and to learn by natural consequences. Staff and care providers are to assist the youth with coping and learning from their successes and deficits.

When our youth in out-of-home care make mistakes, staff and care providers need to exhibit patience, support and guidance. Youth need to feel the security that we will not give up on them, rather, we will work with them as they learn how to live and function in the adult world.

Ideally, TLP offers the youth the opportunity to transition smoothly from a more restrictive environment to a less restrictive setting based on the readiness of the youth. TLP allows the youth to apply what has been learned in their life skills training to actual daily living. Based on the particular needs of the youth, they may progress from one setting to another but may enter or exit any living situation at any time when it is felt by staff and the youth that they are ready for a change.

When a youth is not successful, staff and care providers should assess the current needs of the youth and modify the case plan accordingly. Our hope is that the majority of issues will be resolved in the current placement. As a last resort, a youth may be returned to a more restrictive setting and receive remedial services as needed. When the youth is ready to progress again, TLP placement may occur.

### **21.7.1 Transitional Living Advocacy**

The Transitional Living Advocate (TLA) is an adult, 21 years of age or older, who provides the youth a safe place to stay, continued life skills training, encouragement and guidance in regard to employment, education and/or training, and preparation for successful transition from CD custody. The TLA may be married or single and is willing to provide the time, a home, supervision and support needed by the youth transitioning out of care. They must be successful in their own independence, i.e., employed, maintain a household and generally provide a positive role model for the youth. The advocate should be similar to or understanding of the youth's race or ethnic background.



They must have flexible attitudes and expectations of the youth during this difficult time of transition. The advocate should have prior experience with adolescents, be energetic, and have the ability to listen and to handle failure as a learning process. They must have an understanding of adolescent behavior and be able to let the youth make mistakes and deal with natural consequences. Communication is essential when working with youth as well as allowing the youth to form their values.

The advocate should be aware of community resources that will support the youth's endeavors and be willing to assist the youth in accessing those services. Cultural sensitivity is a necessary asset of the advocate as is the ability to work with a variety of people. It will be required for the advocate to work with the Children's Service Worker, support providers, and others in developing and maintaining the youth's case plan.

This type of placement is crucial to the youth's successful transition to adulthood. It is hoped that the advocate will become a life-long friend and mentor for the youth, allowing the youth to return for visits, holidays and occasional support.

Advocates must ensure a safe haven for the youth to stay in; help the youth with employment and education/vocational training; guide the youth and assist the youth with learning to live with rules. The advocate should encourage the youth and provide opportunities for the youth to practice life skills learned in life skills training.

#### **21.7.1.a TLP Advocate Training**

Prior to approval, the advocate must complete the following:

- Successful completion of 18 hours of pre-service, specialized training on adolescent issues through CD including three (3) hours each in cultural/race sensitivity, ILP life skills training overview, adolescent development with an emphasis on what to expect from adolescent behavior, emotional obstacles out-of-home care youth must overcome, adolescent sexuality and behavior management via natural consequences;
- A criminal and child abuse/neglect background screening;
- An approved home study completed by the CD case manager/service worker, in the county that the advocates reside;
- A signed copy of the CM-12, Agreement for the Purchase of TLP Advocate Services; and
- Register with the Family Care Safety Registry;

It is recommended each area ensure that a cross section of youth assist in all phases of the advocate training. This includes recruitment and placement. Placement planning is very important and requires adequate time for a good match. The youth needs to be matched with an advocate who has similar values and has an understanding of the needs of the youth.

#### **21.7.1.b TLP Advocate Approval**

Prior to placement of a youth, appropriate County Children's Services staff, must approve the advocate. Staff shall use form CS-TLP-1 when determining the suitability of the living arrangement. Form CS-TLP-1 provides a procedure for documenting health and safety requirements specific to an older adolescent placed with an advocate or in an ILA.

A TLP advocate has the same right to a fair hearing as a foster parent when approval is denied or revoked. The advocate may also grieve a youth case management decision in the same manner as a foster parent.

#### **21.7.1.c Advocate Maintenance Payment**

The youth shall receive \$586 per month for rent, food, clothing, incidentals and payment to the advocate. \$450 per month shall be paid by the youth to the advocate for food and rent expenses. The youth is to use \$136 per month for other expenses such as clothing, school/work necessities, personal hygiene, grooming, transportation, etc., as well as the establishment of a savings account.

#### **21.7.1.d Characteristics of the Youth**

The youth should be at least 16 years of age with a placement history, which indicates this type of placement as a logical progression to independence. He/she should have developed good decision making skills and has a clear understanding of the program and what is expected.

Life Skills training must be in progress or have been successfully completed prior to placement. The youth should not require close supervision and should have shown the ability to manage money with little to no assistance. Average or above average school performance is desirable as is some work experience. Work experience is not required for entry into this type of placement, however. It is recommended youth enrolled in school full time should not work more than 20 hours per week.

### **21.7.2 Transitional Living Program Group Home (TLG)**

A licensed, residential, child care site where older youth (ages 16-20) concentrate on preparation for independent living and completion of their educational/vocational

programs in a supervised group setting. Youth may currently be enrolled or have successfully completed Life Skills training. Youth should not work more than 20 hours per week, if they go to school full time. Typically youth have been residing in a residential treatment facility. Youth are expected to maintain employment and develop goals and plans for their future. All facilities that are contracted as TLP group homes are licensed as residential child care agencies by the Residential Program Unit within Central Office.

If the FST decides placement in a group home setting would be in the best interest of the youth, staff should contact the Area RCST Coordinator to make a referral. The case manager should have an accurate, updated Residential Treatment Referral (CS-9), which assesses present level of functioning to send to the RCST Coordinator. The case manager may seek an opening in a group home, but it is the responsibility of the RCST Coordinator to notify the group home after approving the placement. Once placed, the group home is responsible for completing a service plan and/or progress report and submitting it to the youth's case manager and to the Area RCST Coordinator at the following intervals: within 60 days of the youth's initial placement, and within 30 days of the end of each 6 months of the youth's placement.

TLP group homes are required to submit a monthly invoice for each child to the RCST Coordinator, who then completes the Children's Services Integrated Payment System Invoice (CS-65), and sends to Central Office for data entry. It is the responsibility of the case manager to update the child's SS-61 to show the youth placed in a TLP placement type. Field 56 (maintenance code) must be coded "No maintenance".

### **21.7.3 Transitional Living Program Single/Scattered Site Apartments (TLS)**

This program offers youth (ages 17-20), ideally from a TLP group home, the opportunity to practice life skills and prepare for the future in an apartment setting. Youth in this type of placement receive support and guidance, but supervision is minimal. To be considered for this option, youth need to demonstrate the ability to make responsible decisions, maintain employment, successfully complete Life Skills Training, and have a clear understanding of the financial and emotional demands of living independently. The contract stipulates there be no more than two residents occupying a given apartment.

If a TLS placement is selected by the FST, the case manager must submit the updated CS-9 to the RCST Coordinator as a referral. Once the placement is approved by Area Office, but prior to occupancy, the contractor must ensure that the apartment selected for the youth meets Division standards by completing and signing Attachment #4, (Transitional Living Program Apartment Standards) of the TLP contract. The contractor shall maintain a completed copy in the youth's file, send a completed and signed copy to the youth's case manager and the referring RCST Coordinator.

The case manager, or Children's Service Worker for the youth, shall also complete the TLP Scattered Site Apartment Checklist (CS-TLP-2), to ensure the living arrangements are appropriate. The case manager or worker should complete the CS-TLP-2 every six (6) months or anytime a youth changes residences. It is also the responsibility of the case manager to update the youth's SS-61 showing a placement type of TLS, with the vendor number of the TLS facility and a maintenance code of 3-no maintenance. The contractor is responsible for submitting a monthly invoice to the RCST Coordinator, who then completes the CS-65 for payment.

NOTE: This is not an ILA placement; therefore, maintenance payments are never paid directly to the youth. Payment is always made directly to the contractor for the youth. The case manager should be sure that the youth's SS-61 reflects no maintenance payment in field 56.

The contractor is responsible for providing the following when a child is placed in a TLS apartment:

- Housing – Helping youth locate an apartment, paying security deposit, signing lease, furnishing the apartment and purchasing basic supplies.
- Financial Support – Weekly allowance, paying rent, paying all utilities, paying phone bill.
- Life Skills Training - Help the youth practice the hard and soft skills they learned through the class setting and one-on-one assistance, as needed by the youth.
- Emotional Support/Guidance – On-call 24 hour support, informal counseling, bi-weekly meetings, crisis counseling.

The contractor shall provide a service plan/progress report to the case manager, youth and RCST Coordinator within sixty (60) days of the youth's initial placement, and within thirty (30) days of the end of each six months of the youth's placement. This plan shall be reviewed at each FST meeting. If placement in a TLP exceeds 12 months, the FST shall review the youth's progress and assess if continued placement in a TLS setting is appropriate.

If at any time the case manager thinks that the contractor for TLS is not meeting the requirements outlined in the Transitional Living contract, the case manager should contact the RCST Coordinator with the concerns to be addressed.

## **21.8 Exit Plan Interview**

The goal of an exit plan interview is to identify anticipated service needs for older youth who are in the process of transitioning out of foster care. Youth who have a comprehensive transition plan are better equipped to transition successfully

from foster care to self-sufficiency. An unintended consequence of not preparing youth to exit from foster care is the youth becoming homeless.

**Related Subject: Section 7 Glossary/Reference: *Homeless Youth and Child***

In order to prepare youth for their exit from the foster care system, staff shall complete an exit plan interview.

Exit planning should be viewed as a collaborative effort between the youth, staff and FST members to ensure needed services are in place or the youth is aware of how to access services in their community prior to release. To assist staff and youth in gaining a better understanding of what will be needed by the youth, the Exit Plan Interview form, CS-ILP-7, was developed. This tool is intended to create a dialogue between staff and youth. It can also serve as an attachment for the youth's case plan providing additional information on current placement, detailed educational information, employment, and support systems.

Case Manager should plan to meet with their youth to complete the Exit Plan Interview:

- At least 6 months prior to the youth leaving custody
- All youth aged 17
- Annually for all youth over the age of 18 who remain in foster care

While the Exit Plan Interview can be used as additional information for the case plan (CS-1), it shall be filed in the Chafee section of the case record.

## **21.9 Resource Development**

While CD is considered the primary caretaker for youth in out-of-home care, the community plays a crucial role in their healthy development. Given the multitude of needs of youth in and exiting out-of-home care, CD must access and partner with community resources. Community supports are essential, and our efforts to develop an array of resources to meet their areas of need should be on-going. Making a smooth transition to self-sufficiency will depend on the youth's physical, psychological, and emotional well-being. A successful transition to independence hinges on building partnerships with other public and private agencies in the community.

Children's Services Workers and IL Specialists or their designees should be cognizant of community resources already available. The intent of Chafee is to focus on services for youth who are in care, are aging out, or have aged out of the foster care system. Chafee funds are meant to be short term, flexible, and used as a safety net to meet the needs of the youth to assist them in their efforts toward independence. Youth should always be encouraged to work toward independence and self-sufficiency. Refer to and utilize all available resources before accessing

Chafee funds. Look to the youth as a resource. Other resources may include, but should not be limited to the following:

- Employment Agencies
- Service/Volunteer Organizations for Mentoring
- College/Technical School Financial Assistance
- Faith-Based Resources
- Clothing Resources
- One Stop Centers
- Transportation Resources
- Child Care Resources
- Emergency Housing Assistance
- Food Pantries
- Community Action Agencies
- Adult Education Programs
- Income Maintenance Programs/Resources
- Medical Clinics
- Other State Agencies

#### **21.10 Outcomes**

By utilizing resources available through the Division, such as Chafee and the community, youth who are currently in out-of-home care or left the legal custody of the Division will be:

- better prepared to meet the challenges they face on their road to self-sufficiency and independence;
- will understand the importance of their role and personal responsibility to self and community;

TITLE: CHILD WELFARE MANUAL  
SECTION 4: OUT-OF-HOME CARE  
CHAPTER 21: CHAFEE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM (CFCIP)  
EFFECTIVE DATE: August 28, 2004  
PAGE: 31

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- will be more aware of community resources and how to access them if needed;
- will be able to develop their own support system to enable them to transition successfully to independence.

MEMORANDA HISTORY: CD04-15, CD04-56, CD04-79